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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 115: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/50/L.7/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 45 (continued) (A/50/L.7/Rev.1, A/C.5/50/14)

1. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) sought clarification of the functions of the P-5 (Coordinator) referred to in paragraph 5 of the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/50/L.7 (A/C.5/50/14). Her delegation was concerned that the proposed functions, particularly that of managing the day-to-day relations of an administrative and logistical nature with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), amounted to an expansion of the Coordinator's role which was not provided for in the original mandate.

2. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the Coordinator, whose post was crucial to the success of the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL), would not be involved in operational activities. The main functions of the post would be to establish and supervise security arrangements, maintain protocol arrangements with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and oversee the smooth functioning of the office in accordance with the directives of the Representative of the Secretary-General. While the Coordinator would be required to work closely with UNDP on administrative and logistical matters, there would be no duplication of functions.

3. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) said that her delegation was not fully satisfied by the Controller's explanation but would support the draft resolution in view of the urgent need to renew the mandate of the Mission.

4. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should decide to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/50/L.7/Rev.1, additional requirements not exceeding $367,400 would be required under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, and that such additional appropriation as might be necessary would be dealt with in the context of the performance report for the biennium 1994-1995. With regard to the additional requirements of MINUSAL in 1996, the Fifth Committee should further inform the General Assembly that adoption of draft resolution A/50/L.7/Rev.1 would give rise to an additional requirement of up to $886,900 under section 3 of the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997 and that such additional appropriation as might be necessary would be considered by the General Assembly in the context of its approval of the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997.

5. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that her delegation did not object to the draft decision on the understanding that the Committee was proceeding on the basis of the Advisory Committee's report.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt his proposal.

7. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued) (A/50/6/Rev.1 (vols. I and II), A/50/7 and A/50/16)

First reading

Section 1. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination

Section 2. Political affairs

Section 3. Peace-keeping operations and special missions

Section 4. Outer space affairs

Section 5. International Court of Justice

Section 6. Legal activities

8. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to begin its detailed consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. At the end of the first reading and after completion of the first rounds of informal consultations aimed at resolving particular points of difficulty, the Committee would put together all the matters and/or amounts approved ad referendum in respect of each section in first reading, together with those approved in respect of revised estimates and programme budget implications, in order to approve in second reading, after recosting, the total programme and appropriation for each section. The package deal resulting from the whole exercise would form the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. He would take it that the Committee wished to proceed along the lines he proposed.

9. It was so decided.

10. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), presenting the Advisory Committee's recommendations on sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, said that, with regard to section 1 (Overall policy-making, direction and coordination), the Advisory Committee was of the view that the Office of the President of the General Assembly should be provided with adequate resources.

11. With regard to the estimate for the United Nations Board of Auditors, the Advisory Committee had been informed that the estimates received from the Board had been included in proposed programme budgets without change.

12. The Advisory Committee regretted the failure of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to provide it with the information it had requested on the total staff resources available to that Office outside the regular budget. It was essential for all units of the Secretariat to provide the Advisory Committee with all the information it requested. The Advisory Committee recalled that the

General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to ensure that there was no duplication of the work of other Secretariat units and wished to reiterate that point with regard to the work of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

13. Turning to section 2 (Political affairs), the Advisory Committee welcomed recent efforts to streamline the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO). However, further review of the grade structure of DPA was still necessary. The Advisory Committee took note of the creation of two new regional divisions, Africa I and Africa II, in DPKO. In that connection, it requested the Secretary-General to review criteria for the division of responsibilities between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations so as to ensure a clear delineation of tasks between the two Departments and close cooperation in carrying out their mandates. In particular, current arrangements for the staffing of geographical desks in both Departments should be reviewed in order to eliminate overlaps and ensure coordination. Pending the completion of that review, the Advisory Committee recommended against acceptance of the proposal to convert into established posts one P-3 post and four General Service temporary posts under the subprogramme for regional, political and security cooperation.

14. On the subject of the breakdown of posts in regional centres for disarmament, the Advisory Committee intended to examine the issue in the context of its consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the financing of regional centres which was to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.

15. As for the proposal to provide $440,000 for the subvention of UNIDIR in the biennium 1996-1997, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the proposed subvention while reiterating its recommendation that every effort should be made to secure unrestricted contributions and to charge a fair share of the Institute's support costs to tied contributions so that the charges to the regular budget could be minimized.

16. As to section 3 (Peace-keeping operations and special missions), the Advisory Committee noted the Secretary-General's request to transfer 19 posts (one D-1, eight P-5, two P-3 and eight General Service posts) from the support account to section 3 of the regular budget and redeployment of a D-1 post from section 2 to section 3. The Advisory Committee had been provided with additional information on the 19 posts and had been informed that the goal was to have 122 posts on the regular budget to be granted over a period of time. It was not necessary at the current stage to take a position on the total number of posts, since the level of future peace-keeping operations could not be predicted and a review must be undertaken of the number of support staff. The Advisory Committee therefore did not recommend at the current stage the transfer of any of the eight General Service posts to the regular budget. Likewise, it did not recommend for conversion the four Professional posts under the Finance Management and Support Service and the Personnel Management and Support Service, since the functions attached to those posts were dependent on the level of peace-keeping operations at any given time.

17. On the issue of the number of military personnel on non-reimbursable loan from Governments to the United Nations, the Advisory Committee would give its

views after it received the report requested from the Secretary-General on the various aspects related to the secondment to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, at no cost to the United Nations, of military and civilian personnel by a number of Member States.

18. The Advisory Committee welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to streamline the administrative structure and activities of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which had resulted in a net reduction of $8,614,500. Additional savings could be achieved, however, particularly in the area of personnel.

19. He had no comments to add to the Advisory Committee's views on section 4 (Outer space affairs) set out in paragraphs II.36 and II.37 of its first report (A/50/7).

20. The Advisory Committee's recommendations on section 5 (International Court of Justice) were predicated on the assumption that it would be possible to effect savings on telephone calls, travel and common services. In particular, the application of new technology should enhance the Court's capacity to deal with a larger workload and to achieve greater cost-effectiveness. In view of that and of the fact that resources had been requested for further automation of the work of the Court in 1996-1997, the Advisory Committee recommended against acceptance of the request to convert three temporary posts to established status.

21. Finally, with regard to section 6 (Legal activities), the Advisory Committee welcomed the steps that were being taken to introduce modern technology in order to enhance productivity and reduce expenditure on legal activities. Extrabudgetary resources for legal activities were estimated to decrease from $4,819,000 in 1994-1995 to $3,894,100 in 1996-1997. In that connection, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Secretary-General should review the adequacy of reimbursements from extrabudgetary activities as it related to demand.

22. With respect to perceived anomalies in the current practice of paying honoraria, since it was the Assembly that had established the basic principle with regard to the payment of honoraria and, in each case, decided upon the exceptions, it must be for the Assembly alone to decide whether those exceptions must be maintained, increased or abolished.

23. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the six sections of the proposed programme budget section by section.

Section 1. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination

24. Mr. MUÑOZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, drew attention to the need to streamline and eliminate overlapping and redundant activities as well as those of little or no value. The duplication of activities within the Organization was a problem that needed to be urgently addressed by the administrative and executive heads of departments, programmes and agencies charged with implementing the mandates defined by Member States. The ability to identify the most effective means of implementing mandates should be one of the

criteria for the selection of programme managers. The European Union was of the view that it was the responsibility of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to take the lead in efforts to achieve that important objective.

25. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) indicated that she wished to raise points applicable to the whole of the programme budget. The United States was disappointed that the proposed budget did not contain any zero-based review of resources and was totally incremental in approach. That concept had been clearly illustrated with regard to the staffing table, and her delegation would like the Committee to adopt an approach that separated out functions from additional human resources. She doubted whether the staffing table represented the total human resources available to the Organization, which was all the more worrying since the staffing table had been one of the fundamental controls which Member States had exercised over human resource allocations in the budget.

26. Her delegation was also concerned that the ratio of General Service to Professional staff remained extraordinarily high and any economy dividends which might have resulted from automation had not materialized. Travel and general temporary assistance needed to be cut back, especially since general temporary assistance had been used for unauthorized purposes in the sphere of overall policy-making, direction and coordination. Moreover, her delegation believed that the use of certain consultants was inconsistent with the financial regulations and it was also concerned about the quality of such consultants.

27. Noting that some programmes were overfunded and others underfunded, she said that her delegation could not determine which were which because it had not received the performance report for 1995. In the absence of such a report, the budget could not be satisfactorily analysed.

28. She indicated that strengthening the budget did not automatically mean allocating additional resources. In that connection her delegation noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General had not recommended any additional resources for the Advisory Committee.

29. Finally, her delegation endorsed the proposal by New Zealand that air travel by spouses of members of the Advisory Committee should not be reimbursed, and called on the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to make available to ACABQ the information requested in paragraph I.7 of that Committee's report (A/50/7).

30. Ms. ALMAO (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of the Australian and Canadian delegations, said that she had reservations about the substantial travel provisions that had been requested for the Advisory Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC). She wondered whether the entire provision of $1,573,000 for travel by ACABQ members would be needed in 1996-1997. The figure had been intended to provide for an extra 10 weeks in the duration of sessions to deal with the Advisory Committee's increased workload owing to peace-keeping activities. However, all the indications were that the number and cost of peace-keeping operations would decline in 1996-1997 and the streamlining of budgetary procedures for dealing with peace-keeping budgets approved in resolution 49/233 would dramatically reduce the number of budgets which ACABQ would have to examine.

31. She also questioned the need for $52,600 for air travel by spouses of members of the Advisory Committee. At a time when the United Nations was under severe financial stress and had clamped down on all official travel by staff, they could see no justification for providing air travel for spouses. She therefore proposed the repeal of the exceptional provisions for spouses' air travel and the deletion of $52,600 from the relevant section of the programme budget.

32. Noting that $788,000 had been requested for travel by CPC members, and given that the Committee's appropriation for travel had been consistently underspent in previous bienniums, she questioned whether the resource growth of $30,000 was justified. She would appreciate additional information on the consistent pattern of underexpenditure by CPC, and believed that the 1996-1997 travel provision should be based on the Committee's actual expenditure for 1994-1995. That information should be provided to the Fifth Committee with a view to considering whether the request for $788,000 was realistic.

33. Mr. KOUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the total staff resources available to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General should be disclosed together with the source of financing. His delegation was concerned by the ratio of General Service staff to Professional staff in the Executive Office. Such an imbalance was inconsistent with the current productivity requirements of the United Nations and should be corrected in the next budget. His delegation had similar concerns about the request for more posts made by ACABQ.

34. Regarding the increase in resources for the Joint Inspection Unit, his delegation agreed with ACABQ that requirements had shrunk over the previous few years, especially in the peace-keeping sphere. He urged more effective use of resources and greater efforts to ensure that there was no overlapping in the Unit's work.

35. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) supported the Secretary-General's recommendation for increased resources for the secretariat of the Advisory Committee in view of the latter's increased workload. Similarly, the necessary resources should be guaranteed to ensure that CPC could carry out its work effectively. In order to ensure proper representation in that body, it would be necessary to defray the travel costs of representatives from developing countries, who in many cases had to travel to New York from their respective capitals.

36. Regarding the budget of the Board of Auditors, her delegation would welcome further details on how the Secretariat intended to implement the mandates contained in General Assembly resolution 48/218 B, which had called for external oversight bodies to be strengthened but had not made provision for additional appropriations.

37. Referring to paragraph 1.37 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (A/50/6/Rev.1), her delegation was concerned at the omission of development questions from the list of issues addressed by the Secretary-General, and, with reference to paragraph 1.45, she asked for more information about advisers and consultants engaged by the Secretary-General as well as

details of the sources of financing of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

38. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that in general his delegation supported the recommendations of ACABQ regarding resources for policy-making organs and noted that the Executive Office of the Secretary-General should set a good example on the issue of rationalizing resources. For the sake of transparency, the information requested of the Executive Office by ACABQ should also be made available to the Fifth Committee.

39. On the question of experts and consultants, it would be helpful to have fuller information on the nature of the expertise and advice offered to the Executive Office by such individuals with a view to taking a fresh look at their role.

40. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium) said that, with reference to paragraph 20 of General Assembly resolution 48/228 I, which provided for the creation of a separate budget section for internal oversight, his delegation would appreciate further information about the Secretary-General's failure to create such a section for external verification in the light of the comments contained in paragraph 14 of the ACABQ report.

41. Referring to paragraph I.34 of the proposed programme budget, he noted that it had been assumed that CPC would meet for six weeks in 1996 and four weeks in 1997, and that a resumed session of the Committee would be required in 1996 in order to consider the outline of the programme budget for 1998-1999. He would appreciate clarification on exactly how long CPC would meet in 1996, and suggested that the wording of the paragraph should be amended to eliminate any ambiguity.

42. Mr. TOYA (Japan) stressed the importance of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in the field of preventive diplomacy and therefore endorsed the budget allocation for that Office, on condition that streamlining of activities continued. Similarly, in view of the increased profile of external auditing, his delegation supported the budget increase for the Board of Auditors.

43. Regarding the travel and subsistence allowance for members of ACABQ, his delegation required more detailed information, for example on the question of reimbursement of air fares for spouses. With reference to similar allowances for CPC members, he suggested that Member States might wish to defray the travel expenses of their own representatives while guarding against the possibility of creating unfair conditions for representatives from developing countries.

44. Mr. GOKHALE (India) endorsed the comments made by the representative of New Zealand regarding consistent overbudgeting in the case of CPC, and called for more realistic estimates in the future. He agreed with previous delegations that the use of consultants in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General should be drastically curtailed.

45. He reminded the Committee that ACABQ did not set its own workload; it merely responded to the demands placed on it by the Fifth Committee and the

Secretariat. Delegations should proceed from the assumption that the figures provided by ACABQ were provisional and could always be revised. The Fifth Committee should be wary of making drastic cutbacks in the budget of ACABQ and then finding that the Committee had been starved of necessary resources.

46. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) said that, the necessary resources should be provided for CPC in order to ensure the participation of representatives from developing countries. On the question of the rights of the Palestinian people, the Egyptian delegation requested that resources should continue to be made available until a lasting and just solution to its problems had been found.

47. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the Executive Office of the Secretary-General had every intention of streamlining its activities, and to that end an Efficiency Board had been set up to which the Secretary-General had pledged his full support. Regarding the question of travel, he indicated that the Secretariat was entirely governed by the decisions of the General Assembly in that sphere.

48. The past performance of ACABQ and CPC had been studied very carefully in order to avoid overbudgeting, but both committees had consistently overspent, which explained the recommendation for a modest increase in resources. In the case of ACABQ, the Secretariat was also guided by the Committee's own work programme, which was itself determined by decisions of the General Assembly and supplemented by a reasonable estimate of the resources required for peace-keeping operations, for example. In the case of external oversight bodies, the Secretariat had been guided by the operational requirements identified by those bodies themselves.

49. Paragraph 1.37 of the proposed programme budget indicated that the Secretary-General was expected to play an active role in a number of fields. In order to carry out his functions effectively, he required the assistance of a large number of multi-skilled staff. Many of the General Service staff employed in his Executive Office did not simply carry out secretarial duties: they also functioned as record-keepers, research assistants and administrative assistants, and therefore the apparently high ratio of support staff to Professionals was misleading. Regarding the provision for consultants, he explained that in-house expertise was used whenever possible, but in some unusual or exceptional cases it was necessary to seek independent advice, and the budget provision reflected that fact. With reference to the alleged failure to disclose the resources of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, he indicated that all the resources had been accounted for in table 1.15 of the proposed programme budget which also included extrabudgetary resources.

50. Noting that it was physically impossible to produce the second performance report for 1994-1995 before December, he doubted whether the Fifth Committee would be willing to wait until that time to review the budget, and mentioned that such a request had never been made before. On the question raised by the representative of Belgium regarding the creation of a separate budget section for internal oversight, he said that the Secretariat had been aware of the resolution requesting the Secretary-General to formulate proposals on the best structure for the budget. In the case of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, it had been decided that the most suitable arrangement was functional

independence from the Secretariat while remaining the responsibility of the Secretary-General. In the case of other bodies such as the Board of Auditors and CPC, which had a very broad responsibility touching on all areas of the Secretariat's activity, it had not been thought advisable to change their budget structure. However, the Secretariat would welcome any further guidance on modifying the format of the budget.

51. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said, with regard to the Advisory Committee's proposals for meetings, that ACABQ did not formulate a programme of work independently of the needs of the Fifth Committee and the other parties whose resources it examined. Whereas at one time the Advisory Committee had held a maximum of 75 meetings a year, in 1994 it had held almost 300 meetings, and would now be required to meet over a longer period in any given year in view of the timetable adopted by the General Assembly for peace-keeping operations.

52. In addition to responding to the needs of the Fifth Committee, the Advisory Committee also considered the budgets of other operations, some of which were larger than the annual regular budget expenditure of the United Nations. Recently the Advisory Committee had devoted so much time to peace-keeping operations that it had not paid sufficient attention to those other operations and programmes, a situation which must be rectified in the interest of proper scrutiny on behalf of Member States. While there had been overexpenditure on the Advisory Committee's travel, that had arisen simply because the estimates had not fully reflected the Advisory Committee's requirements. He could provide further details in informal consultations.

Section 2. Political affairs

53. Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) said that while his delegation supported the estimates under section 2 in view of the importance of political affairs, it was opposed to the emphasis on preventive diplomacy, an area in which no clear mandate had yet been formulated. Further, the section seemed not to contain any resources for implementation of the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism. His delegation would welcome clarification of that omission.

54. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that his delegation was concerned at the lack of resources for the disarmament institutes. Indeed, existing resources for those institutes had been used for other purposes, whereas in fact resources should be used only for the purpose for which they had been approved. He noted that resources for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking had more than doubled, but that no justification for the increase had been given. Some of those resources had been taken from anti-apartheid activities. His delegation had hoped that any redeployment would have been to other priority areas for Africa. His delegation was sceptical of the proposed redeployment of resources from the Division for Palestinian Rights in view of the critical stage reached in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

55. Mr. KOUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) said that his delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that there was a need for further review of the grade structure of the Department of Political Affairs, which was still top-heavy. With regard to table 2.13, a substantial amount was provided for consultants and experts, in connection with the development of information technology, and his delegation would welcome further information thereon in the context of the Department's expenditures. Given the negative impact of inadequate staffing on the work of the sanctions committees, and the inability of the Secretariat on occasion to process submissions in a timely manner, his delegation welcomed the proposed strengthening of that area.

56. Ms. ALMAO (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Canada and Australia, said that the three delegations fully supported the Secretary-General's proposal to convert 11 Professional posts from the support account to section 3, and to redeploy one D-1 post from the Department of Political Affairs to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. She also agreed with the Advisory Committee that the transfer of eight General Service posts from the support account to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations should not be approved in view of the existing ratio of support to Professional staff under the regular budget. Lastly, she endorsed the ACABQ recommendation that the staff and non-staff resources of the United Nations Trust Supervisory Organization should be kept under review.

57. Ms. RUERGO (Cuba) said that her delegation would welcome an explanation of the proposal to eliminate resources for the Office of the Coordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon. With respect to table 2.5 in the proposed programme budget, she would welcome a breakdown of expenditure by policy-making body. Her delegation supported the maintenance of resources for the Special Committee on decolonization as the principal body in its field. With regard to paragraph 2.11 of the proposed programme budget, she wished to know where the Department of Political Affairs would find the resources to provide the Trusteeship Council with substantive servicing. She agreed that there was overemphasis on preventive diplomacy in the proposals under section 2.

58. In view of the continued relevance of the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, she could not support the proposed redeployment of two posts to other offices. With respect to the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch, the reference in paragraph 2.74 to the abolition of one P-5 post seemed odd, given the mention in paragraph 2.77 of a provision of $28,600 in connection with a backlog in that office. Lastly, with regard to regional centres for disarmament, her delegation supported the Advisory Committee's comment concerning long-term proposals by the Secretary-General with regard to their financial viability.

59. Mr. BRISEID (Norway) said that in view of the cost-effectiveness of preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping, the Department of Political Affairs should be given the necessary resources. His delegation supported the reallocation of resources from activities concerning Lebanon, apartheid and the Trusteeship Council. At a time when the Organization was coming under increased financial scrutiny, it was important to end redundant activities and focus resources on priority areas. Given the climate of budgetary constraints, Member

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States must be flexible in response to requests by the Secretary-General for resources to carry out tasks in fulfilment of the Charter.

60. Mr. GOKHALE (India) agreed that it would be useful to have organizational charts reflecting the existing situation and the new situation if additional resources for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking were in fact approved. However, it might not be appropriate for the Fifth Committee to take administrative and financial decisions in the absence of political decisions by the General Assembly in that regard. With respect to the regional centres for disarmament, his delegation was particularly concerned that the Director for Kathmandu had not been able to assume his post. He wished to know when funds would be made available to enable him to do so.

61. Mr. MIHAI (Romania) said that his delegation supported the views of the Advisory Committee on section 2, in particular regarding the additional resources needed for Security Council affairs. He supported the comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation concerning the sanctions committees. Lastly, he noted the comments of the Advisory Committee regarding the division of responsibilities between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

62. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine) said that the Department of Political Affairs had an important role to play in the discharge of Charter functions. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposals under section 2 and the comments of the Advisory Committee, and, in particular, the strengthening of servicing for the sanctions committees. It was to be hoped that the additional resources would mean the end of delays in processing requests.

63. Mr. HAMID (Sudan) said that his delegation fully supported the views of the Advisory Committee in paragraph II.6 of its report regarding the need for justification of the proposed reduction in the resources of the Division for Palestinian Rights, whose staffing should be maintained.

64. Mr. TOYA (Japan) said that preventive diplomacy and peacemaking had become increasingly important, and the necessary resources should be made available for those purposes. Disarmament, including the regional centres, was also very important, and his delegation would be following closely the situation regarding the Director for Kathmandu.

65. Mr. TOURE (Mali) said that the regional disarmament centres must be given adequate resources to discharge their mandates, that his delegation could not support any reduction in resources for the Division for Palestinian Rights, and that the resources released by the termination of activities in connection with apartheid should be used for other priority areas in Africa.

66. Mr. DIMOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with remarks by earlier speakers concerning the need to strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to service the sanctions committees. Bulgaria had already had occasion to express its concern regarding backlogs in the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 724 (1991) concerning Yugoslavia, and had drawn attention to the need to strengthen the Secretariat units involved in processing applications to that Committee. It therefore

supported the proposals by the Secretary-General to that end and the recommendations by ACABQ in paragraph II.9 of its report.

67. Mr. MONGELLA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation associated itself with the comments by the representatives of Uganda, India, Cuba and other countries regarding the need to maintain and even strengthen the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. That Committee's work was of particular importance in the current context of positive moves towards a settlement of the Palestine question.

68. His country would look favourably on the redeployment of resources released by the elimination of apartheid to other areas of critical concern, in particular, development-related activities in Africa.

69. In view of the acknowledged need to strengthen the regional centres for disarmament, his delegation wondered why the Director for Kathmandu was still languishing in New York.

70. The United Republic of Tanzania agreed with the proposal by India that the preparation of organization charts showing the proposed structure of the Secretariat would considerably help the Committee in its deliberations. In addition, with regard to cooperation between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Secretary-General should review the criteria for the division of responsibilities between those two bodies so as to ensure a clear delineation of their tasks and to avoid the implementation of activities with conflicting mandates and authorities.

71. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the Department of Political Affairs had made major efforts to reorganize its operation. To that end, the two parts of the Department had been merged in March 1994 and the current proposed budget presented a far more streamlined version of its operation. Since preventive diplomacy, good offices and peacemaking efforts constituted one of the pillars of the Organization's work, as affirmed in the 1992-1997 medium-term plan, the outline of the budget and the General Assembly resolutions on "An Agenda for Peace", there was a consequent need to strengthen activities in that area. That need had been met by redeploying staff resources available within the Department and by pursuing maximum efficiency gains, without adversely affecting programme delivery.

72. By comparison with the 1994-1995 budget, the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997 showed a reduction of 27 posts in the Department, not all resulting from the elimination of apartheid: some had been achieved through efficiency gains. He believed that, with those resources, the Department would be able to fulfil its mandate.

73. The issue of resources released by the elimination of apartheid had been considered at length by the General Assembly, which had decided to redeploy those resources, to the maximum extent, to programmes benefiting African countries, such as the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (NADAF), the Uganda-based African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the

Treatment of Offenders, the desertification programme and Africa-related activities of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. The suggestions put forward by speakers regarding redeployment of those resources were, therefore, already being followed.

74. Agreeing that the three regional centres for disarmament in Africa, Latin America and Asia were not operating well, he pointed out that the General Assembly had only approved very limited funding. To be effective, those institutes needed directors, local support, offices and minimum operating funds, and the Assembly had taken the decision that there should be regular budget funding for only one director's post. Unless extrabudgetary funding could be found for the other posts, a physical presence could not be maintained in the countries concerned. The status of extrabudgetary funding was illustrated in table 2.24, from which it was clear that resources were inadequate. The issue was problematic and would be addressed in the forthcoming report by the Secretary-General on support for the regional centres for disarmament, which had been requested by the Advisory Committee.

75. With regard to the need to improve servicing of the sanctions committees, he assured the Committee that the Secretariat was very aware of the importance of those activities and had adopted, over the previous year, several measures to that end. The proposed budget provided for a much firmer basis for the work of those committees.

76. In response to the question whether the Organization should phase out its activities in Lebanon, he drew attention to the report contained in document A/49/388, in which the Secretary-General had confirmed that the United Nations system should continue to play a role in the reconstruction of Lebanon but had pointed out that, in the light of the improved situation in Lebanon, there was no need to maintain the Office of the Coordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon at its current level and it could be phased out as a separate unit, with the redeployment of its activities to UNDP. Those views had been accepted by the General Assembly without dissent.

77. Where the Trusteeship Council was concerned, the Secretariat had been guided by the relevant General Assembly decisions. With the admission of Palau as a member of the United Nations the Council had, however, completed its mission and no increase in its workload was anticipated: the existing staff requirement was therefore adequate for the Council's needs.

78. The Division for Palestinian Rights was part of the General Assembly Affairs Division and, since the two other subsidiary branches of that Division - the General Assembly Secretariat Services Branch and the General Assembly Subsidiary Organs Secretariat Services Branch - were experiencing a substantial increase in their workload, with the establishment of many open-ended working groups, the Secretariat had proposed the redeployment of two posts from the Division for Palestinian Rights to those bodies as an internal staffing arrangement with no implications for other divisions. He foresaw no difficulty in maintaining adequate services for the Division for Palestinian Rights.

79. Finally, he pointed out that the decision to abolish one P-5 post from the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch and to create support

services for two years in the same Branch was not, in fact, a paradox, as noted by some representatives, since there was no need to maintain the P-5 post any further and temporary special services could be enlisted for the special task of clearing the backlog of applications to the sanctions committees. The proposed arrangement would result in a savings to the Branch, with no loss of performance.

Section 3. Peace-keeping operations and special missions

80. Mr. MUÑOZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union supported those proposals aimed at reinforcing the capacity of the Organization in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping, especially with regard to the planning and launching of such operations. In particular, the European Union supported the Secretary-General's proposal that 19 posts should be transferred from its support account to section 3 of the regular budget and considered that the reasons advanced by ACABQ for its decision not to support the transfer of eight General Service posts was insufficiently clear. In that context, the European Union believed that the ratio of General Service to Professional staff should be carefully analysed and it was prepared to undertake such an analysis, for which purpose it requested detailed information from the Secretariat on those ratios in all departments.

81. Finally, the European Union was concerned over the absence of any provision in the proposed programme budget for ad hoc or special missions in the field of preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping, particularly in view of the ever-growing importance of those activities and the increasing workload they entailed. The funding of such special missions needed to be put on a more secure basis and all relevant options should be given careful consideration.

82. Mr. KOUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) said that his delegation appreciated the consistent efforts by the Secretary-General to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to administer the Organization's peacemaking and peace-keeping activities and it therefore supported his decision to convert 19 posts from support account financing to the regular budget. The Russian Federation also supported the Secretary-General's proposal on transferring eight General Service posts to the regular budget, although it shared some of the concerns expressed by ACABQ regarding the ratio of support to Professional staff. He urged the Secretariat to study carefully the views of delegations relating to that issue.

83. The Russian Federation did not, however, support the Advisory Committee's views regarding the conversion of posts under the Finance Management and Support Service and the Field Administration and Logistic Division, since, as all troop-contributing and equipment-contributing countries could confirm, there was a pressing need to improve the capacity of the Secretariat in those areas.

84. With regard to the issue of internal oversight procedures and the need to systematize the administration of arrangements with contributing countries, the Russian Federation supported the proposals of the Secretary-General aimed at regulating and institutionalizing those procedures and arrangements and it also supported his proposal on the conversion of two P-5 posts from the support account to the regular budget under the Personnel Management and Support Service.

85. With reference in general to budget appropriations for field operations support, his delegation had carefully studied the report by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) (A/50/459) and was deeply concerned at its findings, particularly the problems it had identified in the management of resources, the lack of clear functional responsibilities and the absence of adequate asset controls. The conclusions to be drawn from the report were clear: while the Field Administration and Logistics Division was in need of additional resources, the provision of such resources would not in itself solve the problem of efficiency and rationalization of the Organization's logistic operations. His delegation wished to know the Secretariat's view on the problems identified and the remedial measures proposed in the OIOS report.

86. In conclusion, with regard to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) his delegation supported the efforts by the Secretariat to enhance that body's efficiency without affecting its ability to discharge its mandate.

87. Mr. BRISEID (Norway) drew attention to the importance of the backstopping capacity of the Secretariat and, in that context, welcomed the transfer of 26 posts from the support account to the regular budget.

88. The growth of peace-keeping operations had imposed a heavy burden on the Organization and highlighted the need for a highly effective administrative set-up capable of ensuring efficient contacts between Headquarters and field commanders. For that reason, it was essential to consolidate the relevant administrative units and to place funding of the current ad hoc posts for peace-keeping operations in the Secretariat on a permanent basis.

89. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that, in general, her delegation endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendation to approve the transfer of posts from the support account to the regular budget, but with two caveats. First, such a measure was ultimately a political decision and a final analysis should be carried out to ensure that the regular budget could absorb its costs, bearing in mind that support-account funding enabled the functions to be performed without burdening the regular budget. Second, the United States was concerned that the objective criteria for the conversion of posts set forth by the Secretary-General were not always met in individual cases, as revealed by the Advisory Committee's report.

90. Finally, the United States would not support the addition of any clerical posts for the performance of secretarial functions, in view of the already high ratio of clerical to Professional posts.

91. Mr. TOURE (Mali) said that the Committee should study carefully the issue of converting 19 posts from the support account to the regular budget. His delegation believed that the financial burden of peace-keeping operations should not be shifted to the regular budget.

92. Ms. RODRIGUEZ ABASCAL (Cuba) said that her delegation was deeply concerned that, despite the very divergent views held in the Committee on the Secretary-General's proposal that the basic functions of peace-keeping operations should be financed from the regular budget, the Secretariat had still submitted those

proposals. As it had stated at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Cuba was unable to accept the proposals.

93. With regard to the narrative in section 3 of the proposed programme budget, Cuba sought clarification of the term "power of enforcement" in paragraph 3.6 and wondered what economic and development functions were to be performed by United Nations observer missions. Surely, such functions were more appropriately performed by a development-related office.

94. Finally, her delegation also sought clarification of the division of functions between the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, and stressed the need to avoid duplication, as noted by the Advisory Committee in paragraph II.35 of its report.

95. Mr. GOKHALE (India) said that the stabilization of certain conflict areas and the reduction in the corresponding United Nations peace-keeping missions, such as those in Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda and elsewhere, should be borne in mind. With regard to the establishment of additional posts, India believed that those were justified in some cases but it did not support the manner in which they were to be created. Rather than by conversion from the support account to the regular budget, it favoured the conversion of other regular budget posts, such as those of former anti-apartheid activities.

96. He drew attention to the 95 military personnel on non-reimbursable loan from Governments and suggested that, as that resource was available to the Secretariat at no cost, efforts should be made to utilize it to its full potential.

97. Finally, he reiterated his earlier request for an organization chart reflecting the proposed changes in the Secretariat.

98. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) requested that the Secretariat provide a specific indication of all posts currently dealing with special missions, indicating those which had been deployed from elsewhere, outside the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. In addition, Uganda requested - as it would again under section 7B - that the Secretariat indicate the status of the D-2 post under the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development currently being utilized under special missions.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.